



# Quick Reference: Unix Commands

Commonly used commands and options on UW Uniform Access Unix computers.

The following format is used for commands:

*Italic* indicates a variable that you supply

**Bold** indicates exactly what you type

To display a command description from the Unix Manual:

**man** *command*

A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z

Command	Action	Example
<b>alias</b>	Creates a temporary name for a Unix command.	<b>alias</b> <i>name command</i>
	To remove an alias:	<b>unalias</b> <i>name</i>
<b>ansiprint</b>	Prints a file to a printer connected to your computer.	<b>ansiprint</b> <i>file</i>
<b>assets</b>	Displays your account resources, use, and threshold.	
<b>bg</b>	Places a suspended job in the background.	
<b>cat</b>	Displays a specified file.	<b>cat</b> <i>file</i>
<b>cd</b>	Changes current directory to a different directory.	<b>cd</b> <i>directory</i>
	To change back to your home directory:	<b>cd</b>
	Directory abbreviations: ~ Home directory .. Parent directory . Current working directory	
<b>chmod</b>	Changes permission status for a file or directory.	<b>chmod</b> <i>code file</i> <b>chmod</b> <i>code directory</i>
	To keep a file private:	<b>chmod</b> <i>600 file</i>
	To give everyone read permission:	<b>chmod</b> <i>664 file</i>
<b>compress</b>	Reduces the size of a file and adds .Z to the file's name.	<b>compress</b> <i>file</i>
	To restore a compressed file:	<b>uncompress</b> <i>file.Z</i>
<b>cp</b>	Makes a copy of a file.	<b>cp</b> <i>file1 file2</i>
	To copy a file into a different directory:	<b>cp</b> <i>file directory</i>

	To inquire before overwriting an existing file:	<code>cp -i file1 file2</code>
<b>diff</b>	Compares two files and displays the differences.	
<b>fg</b>	Restarts a suspended job in the foreground.	
<b>finger</b>	Displays user information at the specified computer.	<code>finger userid@computer</code>
	To change your finger entry information:	<code>chfn</code>
<b>fmail</b>	Displays email status for all your accounts.	<code>fmail</code>
	To display your email forwarding address:	<code>fmail -forward</code>
	To set your email forwarding address:	<code>fmail -to userid@address</code>
<b>ftp</b>	Starts the file transfer program with a remote computer.	<code>ftp address</code>
<b>grep</b>	Finds lines in a file matching a character pattern.	<code>grep -icvn patternfile</code>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-i Ignores case</li> <li>-c Lists count of lines that contain pattern</li> <li>-v Lists all lines except those with pattern</li> <li>-n Lists line number for each found pattern</li> </ul>	
<b>head</b>	Displays the first ten lines of a file.	<code>head file</code>
	To display the first <i>n</i> number of lines:	<code>head -n file</code>
<b>help</b>	Displays an online help note.	<code>help note</code>
	To display a list of help notes:	<code>help -l</code>
<b>history</b>	Displays a list of your most recent commands.	<code>history</code>
	To repeat the <i>n</i> th command from the list:	<code>! n</code>
	To repeat your most recent command:	<code>!!</code>
<b>jobs</b>	Displays active jobs and their corresponding job numbers.	<code>jobs</code>
	To start a job in the background:	<code>job &amp;</code>
	To return a job to the foreground by the job number:	<code>fg %number</code>
	To send a running job to the background:	<code>&lt;Control&gt;z bg</code>
<b>kill</b>	Terminates a process by its process identification number.	<code>kill pid</code>
	To use the strongest form of the <b>kill</b> command:	<code>kill -9 pid</code>
<b>logout</b>	Ends your computer session.	
<b>ls</b>	Lists the files and subdirectories in your current directory.	<code>ls -Fltra</code>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-l Lists long format</li> <li>-t Lists by modification time</li> <li>-r Lists in reverse order</li> <li>-F Lists file type with special character</li> <li>-a Lists all files including dot (.) files</li> </ul>	
<b>lynx</b>	Starts a text-only Web browser session at UW home	<code>lynx</code>